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SUBJECT: FINLAND SEEKS TO TAKE INITIATIVE FROM RUSSIA ON
EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE PROPOSALS

REF: SECSTATE 57920

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Michael A. Butler

11. (C) SUMMARY. The Finns agree with the U.S. on how to address Russia's proposed overhaul of European Security arrangements, in particular on the core principles of focusing on existing institutions, examining security comprehensively and working through the OSCE. The challenge for the Finns is to get the EU to act more proactively and with a common voice. They have seen Russia make several grand proposals - on security, energy and EU-Russia institutions - and have not been satisfied with the EU's response; as a result, the Finns would like to see the EU and U.S. take the initiative, in part by driving the agenda at the informal OSCE ministerial in Corfu in June. To that end the Finns have proposed agenda items for the ministerial: establishing a "high level reflection group" to make proposals on resolving frozen conflicts; "reinvigorating the work on military security"; and "launching a debate on new ways to bolster comprehensive security." As Foreign Minister Stubb chaired the last debate on a proposed new European security architecture (in Finland's December 2008 OSCE ministerial), Stubb likely will open the debate at Corfu.
END SUMMARY.

FINNISH AND US VIEW THE SAME

12. (C) In a June 12 meeting with Pol/con chief, Mikko Hautala, senior advisor to Foreign Minister Stubb, said the Finnish and US approaches to the Russian-proposed overhaul of European security arrangements are basically the same (REF). He pointed to agreement on three basic principles for any discussion of the proposals: it would be based on existing institutions, would examine security "comprehensively" and would take place through the OSCE. The challenge the Finns see is not on the transatlantic side, but within the EU. They see inactivity and a lack of coherence, and would like to see the EU address both problems in advance of the informal ministerial in Corfu. They want to see the EU "as active and united as possible."

US/EU SHOULD TAKE INITIATIVE FROM RUSSIA

13. (C) According to Hautala, the Finns have seen the Russians raise a series of proposals - on security, on energy and on EU-Russian institutions - and have not seen the EU respond effectively. They feel the EU needs to be more proactive and organize itself before the next Russian proposal arrives. Regarding a new security architecture for Europe, Hautala said the EU (and the U.S.) must identify topics "that would be useful to us and maybe difficult for them (the Russians)." Foreign Minister Stubb raised this point in a June 1 letter to the Greek and Czech Foreign Ministers, which stated that in Corfu the EU should "voice profound concern over the lack of implementation of some key OSCE commitments" and that rebuilding trust between participating states required a

willingness to fulfill those commitments. (NOTE: Letter sent to Nordic-Baltic desk. END NOTE.)

14. (C) According to the June 1 letter, the EU and U.S. should take the initiative and establish a concrete agenda. The Finns propose three topics: resolution of protracted conflicts; safeguarding and enhancing existing military security, arms control, and nonproliferation commitments; and "re-energizing" comprehensive security. On the first, the Finns propose a "high level reflection group" that would "provide recommendations for enhanced approaches" for resolving those frozen conflicts. Hautala said the conflicts should be addressed comprehensively, not just separately. The high level group would not serve as a diversion or to hide the issue but would keep it on the agenda and "avoid the usual fight in separate political groupings." The group would present its recommendations at the December OSCE ministerial in Athens. Hautala said the Finns realized their proposals may not succeed, but they would like to see the US/EU drive the agenda in some way.

UNCERTAINTY AND SEPARATE VOICES WITHIN THE EU

15. (C) Seeking a united EU is a highly ambitious goal, Hautala allowed. The Finns recognize the significant differences between EU members regarding Russia's proposals. For example, the Finns have engaged the Baltic countries closely, because while the Finns embrace the need for debate on the proposals the Baltics are extremely leery of any debate. Stubb's message to the Baltics has been "our goals are the same, but our tactics differ." In addition, when the European Council meets on June 18 it will have received

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papers on the way forward from the Germans, French and the Secretariat. Hautala expected there would be little time for "major debate." Stubb might propose a set of compromise proposals to facilitate a consensus.

FINNISH ROLE AT CORFU

16. (C) Hautala said that Stubb would have a role at the beginning of the discussion at the ministerial. As Stubb chaired the last debate on the subject - at the last ministerial in Helsinki - it seemed natural for Stubb to frame the debate in Corfu. Stubb may hold a phone conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov before the ministerial, and Stubb hopes to consult with the US before Corfu.
BUTLER